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SUBJECT: Damascus Media Reaction: Al-Hariri's Anniversary
Speeches, Palestinian Territories (2/16)

¶1. Summary: Syrian newspapers sharply reacted to the speeches that Walid Jumblatt, Sa'd al-Hariri, Samir Ja'ja, and other anti-Syria Lebanese figures delivered in the demonstration staged in Beirut to mark the first anniversary of former Lebanese Prime Minister Rafiq al-Hariri's assassination. They said accusations made by anti-Syrian Lebanese politicians were "decadent and insulting," and accused these Lebanese figures of "vulgarity and betrayal of Lebanon and the Arab nation."

Papers also reported that on Wednesday the regional leadership of the Ba'th party in Lebanon condemned the campaign of provocation and accusations made by some Lebanese statesmen in Beirut against Syria and the Lebanese presidency. The leadership refused criticism by those who attacked Syria and criticized their speeches during the Al-Hariri anniversary. It also refuted accusations against the Lebanese national resistance, which liberated the land, pointing out that hurting the symbols of resistance is a red line.

End summary.

¶2. Selected Headlines:

"Arab and Lebanese anger over the campaign of rancor and allegations on the anniversary of the Al-Hariri assassination. It encourages civil strife, deepens fragmentation and flatters Israel. Ba'bda Palace: Lahoud has not succumbed to blackmail and has not pulled back from challenges" (Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 2/16)

"The Kadima Party supports Jumblatt and pledges to protect him" (Government-owned Tishreen, 2/16)

"Two Russian experts denounce the exploitation of the Al-Hariri crime. General Lunev: Russians sympathize with Syria" (Government-owned Tishreen, 2/16)

"Fatah sets its conditions. Mofaz threatens to sever relations with the Palestinian Authority. Israel: Hamas is a hostile entity" (Government-owned Al-Ba'th, 2/16)

¶3. Editorial Block Quotes:

"They Are Re-assassinating Al-Hariri"

An unsigned editorial (2/16) says: "Trading on Al-Hariri's blood never sank to the level it sank to in the February 14 demonstration in Beirut to mark the first anniversary [of his death].... It was a party of invective and abuse. The ethical degeneration and the festival of curses that was led by politicians, who lost their temper and skillfully used pathetic language, did not befit the occasion...or show respect for the thought and legacy of the man who carried a pan-Arab message....

"Al-Hariri was always a big friend of Syria who defended the national and pan-Arab issues of Syria and Lebanon.... Some parties in Lebanon incite against Syria, the resistance, and the Palestinians, while they glorify collaborators, isolationists, and killers."

"There is flagrant interference by Western embassies and their intelligence services in domestic Lebanese affairs.... Lebanese, like Syrians and Arabs in general, are now more aware of the magnitude of the conspiracy that targeted Al-Hariri, a conspiracy that continues to wreak havoc in Lebanon and to target Syria and its positions...."

"Sinking to the Bottom"

An unsigned editorial in government-owned Al-Thawra, reads (2/16): "Some people find themselves in the weakness of their accusations, the inferiority of their vocabulary, and the vulgarity of their ethics....

"We saw Walid Jumblatt sinking in his stinking swamp to the bottom and Sa'd al-Hariri begging as never before.... The scene was eloquent, indeed expressive, and the words and movements were sufficiently indicative. Some people were confused: Is this a commemoration of Al-Hariri's martyrdom or is it a party to seek charity and hurl invective....?

"Everyone in Lebanon heard Ja'ja' saying he wants the presidency at any price, and repeated to those who did not hear: 'at any price.' And no one in Lebanon failed to see the amount of bankruptcy and failure in Walid Jumblatt's trivialities and vulgarity...."

"A Rancorous Festival On Valentine Day"

A political editor commented in government-owned Tishreen, on (2/16): "Yesterday the rancorous ones and the enemies of Lebanon, Syria, and Arabism spread their venom against Syria, the Lebanese presidency, and the Lebanese resistance....

"Speakers in the rancorous festival, who included a person convicted in famous crimes [Samir Ja'ja'], a mentally ill person [Walid Jumblatt], and a political novice [Sa'd al-Hariri], impinged upon Syria, which stopped the Lebanese civil war and offered thousands of martyrs in defense of Lebanon, its Arabism, and its national unity....

"The cheap attack on Syria was the common denominator in the speeches of the same team that linked itself to foreign trusteeship and the anti-Lebanon and anti-Arab plans....

"During the festival alarm-stricken and vindictive faces were taking turns in speeches that assassinated Al-Hariri once again and tried to assassinate the Lebanese national resistance, Lebanon's sovereignty and stability, and Syrian-Lebanese

relations, which have deep roots in history and geography, and which are baptized by blood....

"Steadfast Syria receives the stabs of treachery with the firmness and power of the big ones. It does not slide into the holes of the dwarfs and conspirators. It trusts the Lebanese people, who will not be misled by those who try to mislead them no matter how skilful they are, and no matter what foreign forces support them and what money is wasted to fund their campaign against Lebanon, Syria, and Arabism...."

"A Political and Nervous Collapse"

Muhammad Khair al-Jammali, an editorialist in government-owned Al-Thawra, wrote (2/16): "Speeches delivered by leaders of the gang of hatred and plotting in Lebanon show that they began to suffer a nervous breakdown after the failure of their conspiracy against Lebanon and Syria....

"These Lebanese reached the point of open treason through their impingement upon the symbols of national and pan-Arab sovereignty and through their incitement against the weapons of the resistance, which was, still is, and will continue to be Lebanon's first line of defense against the Israeli danger...."

"When Rancorous Ones Howl"

Isam Dari, an editorialist in government-owned Tishreen, commented (2/16): "We regret the low-level discourse by a group that strayed from the right path and sought to mislead the Lebanese public and international justice....

As for Syria, it rises above trivialities and pitiful people. Syria takes pride in the Lebanese people and their great sacrifices and valiant resistance. Syria is strong with its history and the unity between the people and the political leadership, whether the rancorous ones like it or not. Syria represents the dignity and pride of the nation. The agents and humiliated subservient followers should reconsider their calculations and ask forgiveness from God, the Lebanese people, and the blood of the martyrs. They should know that the nation will not forgive their collaboration with the enemies of Lebanon and Arabism and their exposed roles in creating sedition and splits and fabricating disputes with the brothers to serve the big powers and Zionism...."

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